

Thursday Prayers 16th March 2023

Good Morning, and welcome to our Thursday prayers today, welcome whether here in the Presbytery of Ely Cathedral, or sharing with us at home.



ZOOM connection details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83847809128?pwd=VVhXUGlNWkpaGkyMUdwWHQvcC9tQT09>
ID. 838 4780 9128/Passcode 338053

Our theme today is Celebrating Mothers and we start with the Bible text for today – From Isaiah Chapter 7, Verse 14

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will conceive, and give birth to a son and will call his name Immanuel “

We say together our prayer for this month-

Dear God, Creator of all things,

We believe there is a purpose in all that you have created through the wisdom and love you have given us.

May we always be in the hearts of mothers so that they may raise your children with love.

Let them overcome all the challenges they face with a kindness like yours as their children grow up.

May they fall asleep at night with a thankful heart for all that you have provided for them. Amen

Reflection

Last month the introductory prayer included this line “We pray that we can be good stewards of Your Love to each one of our neighbours” and in her reflection Chris reminded us that Jesus told us to “Love your neighbour as yourself”.

Today, with Mothering Sunday this coming weekend we are particularly thinking of mothers as our neighbours. The secular world call this Sunday “Mothers Day” and encourage lavish spending on treating mothers. As a mother and grandmother I have enjoyed this spoiling,- but I am well aware that this Sunday will be a difficult day for many, perhaps because they did not have an ideal childhood, are struggling as parents, or have not been able to be mothers themselves. Here in the cathedral it has long been the custom that *every* woman is given a small potted primrose by Junior Church members after receiving communion.

But what is “Mothering”?

To me Mothering is much more than respecting, loving and honouring one’s own Mother. It is what we would nowadays call Good Parenting – the Nurturing of happy, caring and responsible youngsters. This can be, and frequently is, provided not just by Mothers. Many fathers these days take a very active part in parenting, as do grandparents, and anyone in the community who is a good influence on young lives –

childminders, teachers, activity leaders – to name just a few, all contribute towards nurturing and encouraging and supporting good parenting. – they are all Mothering in its broadest sense.

We can all play our part in enabling and encouraging good parenting. Many of us are involved with providing nurturing support for families within our churches, whether it is Messy Church, Mid-week groups, Junior Church or by providing Family Friendly spaces during services, all contribute a nurturing ambience.

A struggling Mum may be miles away from her own family, and have few if any friends who understand what she is going through. We “Grandparent figures” can give a cheery welcome and a listening ear that can mean so much. As M U members we aim to provide Christian Care for families – putting our Faith into Action.

In my Trustee role, I know how much our local projects do to support Mothers and Fathers in Good Parenting, as we help struggling families.

AFIA gives a family the chance to relax together, to strengthen family bonds and make new happy memories.

Every item donated to the Refuges, and Hostels, and our latest supported project “Mary’s Child” makes a difference to a family; making it easier for parents to clothe and feed and, with stressful worries lessened, enjoy their children. Every knitted hat, bottle of shampoo or tin of food can make a difference. Perhaps this Lent we can all contribute one extra thing?

Our Mothers’ Union Mothering Sunday campaign this year asked us to give the *Gift of Perseverance* – these virtual gifts empowering women around the world – often women who are themselves responsible for their own families and children.

This prayer is from the campaign booklet, and as we think of families, around the world, and how we can continue to support Good Parenting/Mothering we will take a moment after each section to bring our own response to God.

In every family there are seasons of joys and challenges

Seasons of laughter and seasons of sadness

Times of unexpected joy and times of unwanted trauma

Circumstances to cherish and circumstances to overcome

Seasons of harmony and seasons of discord

Times of resilience and times of weakness

Moments to look forward with hope and moments to look back with thanksgiving

God in every circumstance and season we bring you our worship and praise. Amen.

God in every circumstance and season we bring you our worship and praise. Amen.

Hymn

All our blessings

Tune: All things bright and beautiful

***All our blessings, all our joys
With thankful hearts we sing
Lord of life and Lord of love
Accept the praise we bring.***

***For parents and for children,
For husbands, wives, and friends,
For those whose care enfolds us
With love that never ends***

***For fellowship and friendship
We both receive and give,
For those who've shared our journey
And taught us how to live***

***For all who've shared our sorrow,
Walked with us in our pain
Who've held our hand through darkness
And showed us light again***

***In sacrifice and service
Your love is clearly shown,
Your outstretched arms embrace us
to bring us safely home***

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Intercessions

We pray for:- The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union; for Sheran Harper our Worldwide President; Our Chief Executive, Bev Jullien; and all who work in Mary Sumner House

For our Diocesan President, Hazel, and Trustees in the Diocese of Ely and the Task Group Leaders For Our Province of Canterbury and Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President, and Julia Jamieson our Zonal Trustee.

For Our Worldwide Links:

Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnager in India; Plus the Diocesan Links with Kigali & Vellore

In our wave of prayer we pray today for Kajo-Keji in South Sudan, Tarime in Tanzania, Dutse & Akoko-Edo in Nigeria, and Canterbury in England.

Lord in thy mercy

Hear Our Prayer Amen

Let us say together The Thursday Prayer

**Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

And our Mothers' Union Prayer-

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus name. Amen

Let us share The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen